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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/521,431	01/14/2005	Kenji Sato	XA-10243	1528
181 7590 10/31/2007 MILES & STOCKBRIDGE PC 1751 PINNACLE DRIVE SUITE 500 MCLEAN, VA 22102-3833				
EXAMINER WATTS, ALAN B				
ART UNIT 4112		PAPER NUMBER		
NOTIFICATION DATE 10/31/2007		DELIVERY MODE ELECTRONIC		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

ipdocketing@milestockbridge.com
sstiles@milestockbridge.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/521,431

Applicant(s)

SATO ET AL.

Examiner

Alan B. Waits

Art Unit

4112

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 14 January 2005 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SI/100)
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: ____
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date 5/10/2006 1/14/2005

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference character(s) not mentioned in the description: Numbers 15,17, and 113. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d), or amendment to the specification to add the reference character(s) in the description in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(b) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

2. Applicant is reminded of the proper content of an abstract of the disclosure.

A patent abstract is a concise statement of the technical disclosure of the patent and should include that which is new in the art to which the invention pertains. If the patent is of a basic nature, the entire technical disclosure may be new in the art, and the abstract should be directed to the entire disclosure. If the patent is in the nature of an improvement in an old apparatus, process, product, or composition, the abstract should include the technical disclosure of the improvement. In certain patents, particularly those for compounds and compositions, wherein the process for making and/or the use thereof are not obvious, the abstract should set forth a process for making and/or use thereof. If the new technical disclosure involves modifications or alternatives, the abstract should mention by way of example the preferred modification or alternative.

The abstract should not refer to purported merits or speculative applications of the invention and should not compare the invention with the prior art.

Where applicable, the abstract should include the following:

- (1) if a machine or apparatus, its organization and operation;
- (2) if an article, its method of making;
- (3) if a chemical compound, its identity and use;
- (4) if a mixture, its ingredients;
- (5) if a process, the steps.

Extensive mechanical and design details of apparatus should not be given.

3. The title of the invention is not descriptive. A new title is required that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

5. Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Mentani et al. USP 4425770.

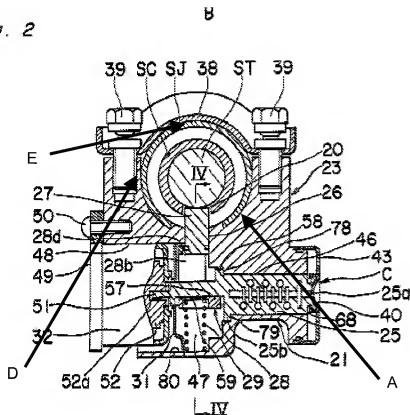
Mentani discloses a similar device comprising a(n):

Re clm 1:

- Steering column (fig 2 below) provided with a steering lock mount portion (SJ, fig 2 below) on its outer circumference and supporting a steering shaft rotatably (ST, fig 2 below)

- Steering lock (bottom portion of fig 2) having a lock key (36, fig 3) for latching said steering shaft (ST, fig 2 below) and a contact portion (A, fig 2 below) that is in contact with a part of said steering lock mount portion (SJ, fig 2 below) of said steering column (fig 2 below)
- Lock bracket (38, fig 2 below) having a contact portion (E, fig 2 below) that is in contact with another part of said steering lock mount portion (SJ, fig 2 below)
- Contact portion (A, fig 2 below) of said steering lock (bottom portion of fig 2) and said contact portion (E, fig 2 below) of said lock bracket (38, fig 2 below) embracing said steering lock mount portion (SJ, fig 2 below) of said steering column (fig 2 below)
- Steering lock mount (SJ, fig 2 below) of said steering column (fig 2 below) abuts at least one of said steering lock (bottom portion of fig 2) and said lock bracket (23 and 38, fig 2 below) with an abutting surface having a non-circular cross section (D, fig 2 below)

Fig. 2



Re clm 2:

- Steering lock mount portion (SJ, fig 2 above) abuts said steering lock (bottom portion of fig 2) with a circular cross section (A, fig 2 above)

Re clm 3:

- Steering lock mount portion is plastically formed by a bulge process

Re clm 4:

- Steering column includes a plastically formed portion other than said steering lock mount portion and said plastically formed portion is plastically formed by a bulge process simultaneously with the steering lock mount portion

It is noted that claims 3 and 4 are product-by-process claims and the process steps are given no patentable weight. See MPEP 2113.

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Peitsmeier et al. USP 4925210, Schelling et al. USP 5988679, Jurik et al. USP 6439607, Heiml US 20030154815, and Clerc et al. EP 206861. Each discloses a steering column with non-circular cross-sections.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alan B. Waits whose telephone number is 571 - 270-3664. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 7:30 am to 5 pm EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David V. Bruce can be reached on 571-272-2487. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

ABW

/David V Bruce/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 4112